

PROFESSIONAL FORUM



IET Company XO

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During the past few years a number of articles have appeared in *INFANTRY* concerning the duties and responsibilities of the company executive officer (XO) in a regular TOE unit. (See, for example, Major Walter A. Schrepel, "Training the Company XO," January-February 1988, pages 19-22; Captain William B. Crews, "The XO as 2IC in a Light Infantry Company," July-August 1987, pages 38-39; and Captain Samuel J. Padgett, Jr., "IHC Executive Officer," November-December 1985, pages 15-16.) But no article has addressed the duties and responsibilities of the XO of an initial entry training (IET) company.

The executive officer of an initial entry training company either influences or is concerned with almost all of the company's activities. Because of this extensive role, he is in a position to contribute directly to the company's success, or to its failure.

Initial entry training is 13 weeks in duration and is divided into five phases. The XO is deeply involved in planning for the support of all five phases.

Phase I. In this so-called soldierization phase during weeks one and two, the XO first ensures that each soldier has his initial clothing issue when

he arrives from the Reception Station. Then he directs and coordinates the issue of linen and TA-50 equipment.

The XO teaches classes that help the soldiers master the basic skills and understand what it means to be soldiers. These classes include subjects such as the responsibility of the soldier, the roles of the U.S. Army and the Infantry, the Geneva and Hague Conventions (Law of War), rape prevention, and Subversion and Espionage Directed Against the U.S. Army (SAFEDA).

The XO also participates in the company's physical fitness program so that he can evaluate the soldiers for potential physical problems.

Phase II. During weeks three to five, the IET soldiers are introduced to the M16 series rifle, battlefield survival skills, and individual tactical skills. The XO is responsible for procuring maintenance supplies and performing organizational maintenance.

The soldiers receive their Class A uniforms during this phase, and the XO must coordinate with the Clothing Initial Issue Point to see that this is accomplished in a well-organized manner.

Phase III. This phase, weeks six through eight, consists of weapons training and the mid-cycle test (MCT).

The XO must obtain the training aids, equipment, and ammunition called for by the test program. Without these items, the soldiers cannot fully prepare themselves to perform the test successfully.

Following the MCT, the company sponsors a family day for the soldiers and their families.

Phase IV. This phase, weeks nine through eleven, consists of MOS-specific training, and the XO is responsible for procuring training aids for each MOS. In an infantry IET company, six military occupational specialties are taught (11B—Infantryman; 11BC2—Light Antiarmor Infantryman; 11C—Indirect Fire Infantryman; 11H—Heavy Antiarmor Weapons Infantryman; 11HE9—ITV Infantryman; and 11M—Fighting Vehicle Infantryman).

During this phase the soldiers spend most of their time in the field at various bivouac sites, depending on the MOS for which they are being trained. The XO may have to support as many as five bivouac sites at one time with such items as communications equipment, personal hygiene articles, ice, field feeding (meals), and seasonal support pieces. During these bivouac periods, the administrative offices are "moved" to the different sites to be

close to the soldiers they support.

Phase V. This phase, the culmination of the previous 11 weeks, consists of the end-of-cycle test (EOCT), the field training exercise (FTX), out-processing, a "super supper," and graduation. The XO coordinates and acquires the training aids and the ammunition needed for the EOCT and the FTX. He is also the driving force behind the logistics, intelligence gathering, operations, and training program for the FTX.

During the FTX, the XO serves as both the opposing forces (OPFOR) leader and as an evaluator. As the OPFOR leader, he controls a force as small as two or as large as 50 soldiers, depending on the scenario. He also serves as an evaluator during platoon missions and squad tactical exercises. An exercise lane tests each squad's reaction and its use of the six dismounted squad battle drills, depending on the situation.

The FTX is the most logistically demanding phase of an IET cycle. When the FTX has been completed, the XO supervises the cleaning and maintenance of all the field equipment to ensure that it functions properly and to prevent unnecessary downtime.

The finale of the cycle is the super supper and the graduation. Because the public and the families of the graduating soldiers are present, it is important for both events to be successful. The XO is the primary organizer and executor of the supper, which is like the MCT family day. Occasionally, he is also designated as the officer in charge of the graduation, with responsibility for the procurement and placement of the displays and the reception items.

INTERACTIONS

To accomplish his duties successfully throughout a cycle, the XO must interact with many people. First among these are the drill sergeants. They are tactically and technically proficient in training IET soldiers, and the XO can gain a great deal of knowledge from them. Coordination

between the drill sergeants and the XO allows the XO to monitor the needs of the individual soldiers and of the company as a whole. This includes ensuring that the health and welfare of the soldiers is at its best so that the soldiers can perform the required tasks within the designated standards. The drill sergeants also aid the XO by maintaining the barracks.

The XO must also interact with the staffs of the battalion, the brigade, and the Infantry Training Center (ITC). Within the battalion, he must work with his fellow company XOs, the battalion XO, the Personnel Administration Center NCO (S-1), the Training Management Activity NCO (S-3), and the logistics NCO (S-4). These are the key individuals he can turn to if he cannot find an answer to a particular question.

At brigade level, the XO interacts with all the principal staff officers and NCOs. He spends more time with the S-1 and the S-4 than with the others, because these two staff agencies conduct assistance visits (after direct coordination with him) to help him maintain excellence in his administrative and logistical areas.

At the ITC level, the XO usually deals only with the S-3 office, because all of the company's requests for training cycle support pass through this office.

But probably his most important interaction is with the first sergeant and the company commander. Like line company XOs, the IET company XO acts on behalf of the company commander and still has all of his other duties to juggle. The first sergeant can be of tremendous assistance in maintaining the company's administrative areas at their best. With the XO and the first sergeant working together as a team, the company commander's administrative burden is reduced and he can concentrate his energies on the company's primary mission—training soldiers.

The relationship between the company commander and the XO is closer than in most TOE units, and each is dependent on the other. In fact, it is not too much to say that the success

or failure of an IET company happens as a direct result of that relationship.

The XO can also be classified as *the* company staff officer since he handles all matters pertaining to administration, intelligence, training, and supply. Perhaps the most important staff action the XO performs is the preparation of the cycle support package. This package contains each cycle's requests for aircraft, ammunition, equipment, personnel support, training areas, and weapons, and is submitted 10 to 12 weeks before a cycle is scheduled to begin.

TRAINING SUPPORT

At the same time, the XO must ensure that all facets of training and training support are accomplished in conjunction with established standards, range operating schedules, training aids acquisition requirements, dining facility support schedules, and transportation schedules. He also makes certain that the support personnel plan ahead to meet the upcoming training requirements.

He is primarily responsible for the operation of the supply and arms rooms and for monitoring the activities of the dining facility. To assist him in these tasks, he has a supply sergeant, an armorer, and a dining facility manager. If the company does not have an armorer, then the XO and the supply sergeant must share this responsibility.

An IET company has another important mission, that of evaluating U.S. Army Reserve units during their annual training. This training is conducted through a system referred to as Reserve displacement, which allows a Reserve company to operate an IET company for a two-week period. During this period, the Active Army cadre members evaluate the Reservists on their performance. The XO is responsible for evaluating the Reserve company XO, supply sergeant armorer, and other support personnel.

The XO is often humorously referred to as the "additional duties" officer, because he must execute :

large number of additional duties, including, on occasion, serving as an investigating officer in formal investigations. Unlike line companies, where four or five lieutenants perform the additional duties, the IET company XO must manage all of those duties by himself. He must also ensure that all reports, many of which are associated

with his additional duties, are properly processed by their suspense dates.

With all of these responsibilities, an IET company XO must be a highly versatile officer who can oversee a variety of activities. It is not a job for the faint-hearted. But if he does his job well, he will have the satisfaction of knowing that the soldiers his com-

pany has trained are some of the finest infantrymen in the world.

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Light Infantry TOW Platoon

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One of the most troublesome debates on the light infantry division centers on the seemingly diametrically opposed problems of increasing the division's firepower and conforming to the requirement that it fit on 500 aircraft sorties. So far, most suggestions to "up-gun" the division favor adding weapon platforms of some kind to the light division's table of organization and equipment (TOE). Such additions, obviously, would add significantly to the number of sorties required to move the division. To further complicate the challenge, any change would have to be supported at the battalion level by the present austere support and supply structure.

In the context of the division's world-wide deployment mission, I believe its most vulnerable point is its antiarmor capabilities, and this is where an improvement in firepower can be made.

Unfortunately, with the great amount of night vision equipment, squad level communication gear, and squad level weapons—including the recent arrival of the M249 machinegun (also called the SAW, or squad automatic weapon)—the light infantryman already has about all he can carry.

But what of the other platoons in the

battalion? The scouts are as overloaded as the infantrymen in the line platoons, if not moreso, and the mortar platoon is appropriately tailored for its job. That leaves the antitank (TOW) platoon, which currently has six HMMWVs and 16 men, including the platoon leader (see Figure 1). Five changes in this platoon's structure, implemented collectively, would greatly improve the lethality, survivability, and adaptability of the platoon

and thereby of the division as a whole:

- Replace the TOW platoon leader's command HMMWV with an M966 TOW HMMWV with a three-man crew.
- Equip each TOW HMMWV with an M60 medium machinegun with a tripod and a turret-mounted pintle.
- Equip one man in each squad with an M203 instead of an M16.
- Add an AN/GRC-160 radio to the platoon leader's vehicle.

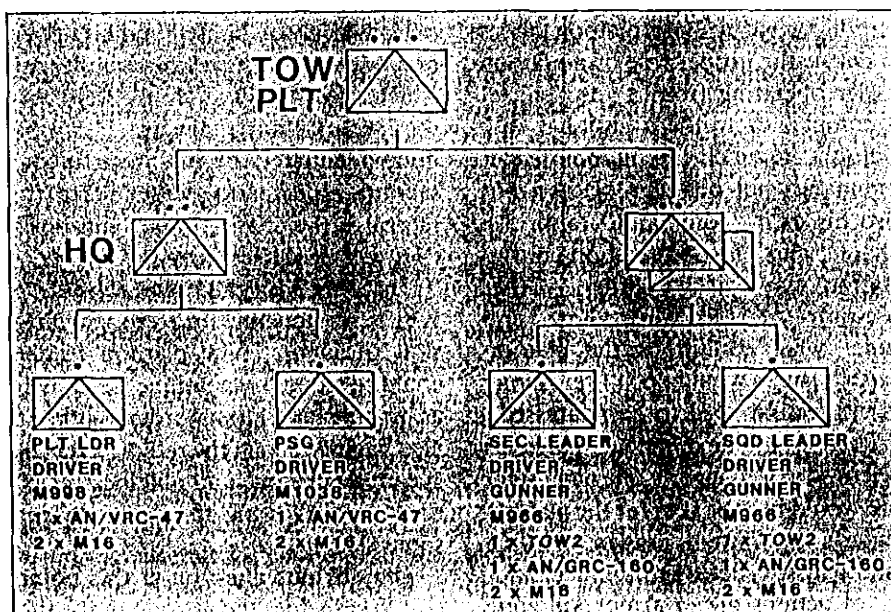


Figure 1. Current TOW platoon TOE (selected components).